Action against Guilty Official

2137. SHRI RAMNATH KOVIND:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE se pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a newsitem as appeared in "Deccan Chronicle' of 4th October, 1999 published from Hyderabad under the caption "CBI nails Midhani CMD for bending rules to claim benefits";

(b) if so, what action has been taken against the concerned official; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take to weed out corrupt public servants found guilty of malpractices?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) In addition to news item, CBI has sent to the Government a self-contained note outlining certain irregularities committed by some officers of Midhani. The self-contained note has been examined and sent to CVC for their advice. Government will take appropriate action as per law against the officers and will not hesitate to take strict action against the culprits if charges alleged against them are proved.

Diffusion of Bomb Shells in Firing Range at Saharanpur

2138. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH "SURYA': Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that few children have been killed due to the explosions which occurred while they were picking brass from the bomb shells in the firing range in the forests near Saharanpur;

(b) if so, whether there is no arrangement for complete diffusion of such bomb shells;

(c) whether mere is any provision for providing compensation to the parents of such killed children; and

(d) if not, what is the remedy with Government to deal with this problem?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No such case of death of children has been reported.

(b) to (d) Unexploded bomb shells are destroyed after the firing is over by the units or the Army formation carrying out the firing. The police and civil administration, after joint inspection with the Army, also issue a "No Damage Certificate' at the end of the firing and before they leave the area. All safety precautions are taken in accordance with the Range Standing Orders before carrying out the firing. These include the posting of sentries at entry/exit points of the range, hoisting of flags and use of bugle calls as warnings both at beginning and end of the practice. As entry during the firing is illegal, no compensation is payable to the intruders for the injury during such practice while the firing is in progress at the range.

Manufacturing of LCA

†2139. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have manufactured the first Light Combat Aircraft;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) by when the said combat aircraft is likely to be tested; and

(d) what expenditure is likely to be incurred on the manufacture of combat aircraft?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. The first Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Technology Demonstrator (TD-1) has been developed. The second aircraft (TD-2) is under integration. Work is also in progress on making LCA prototype vehicles.

(b) and (c) LCA TD-1 and TD-2 aircraft have been designed to increase confidence and reduce risk in development and manufacture of the LCA. In the development phase, it would use the GE-404 engine as the interim power pack. Subsequently, the indigenously developed Kaveri engine would be evaluated and used. The technologies incorporated in the LCA include quadruplex digital flight control, advanced avionics and composite materials. The maiden flight of LCA (TD-1) aircraft is targetted in the first half of year 2000.

(d) Full Scale Engineering Development (FSED) Phase-I of the LCA project, which is in progress currently, has been sanctioned at a cost of Rs. 2188 crore. The cost of Phase-II of the programme is estimated at Rs. 2950 crore. The

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.